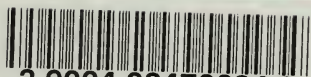


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ESSAY

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE RESTORATION OF THE DIACONATE.

BY THE

REV. J. H. NICOLLS, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF BISHOP'S COLLEGE, LENNOXVILLE;

(CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DIACONATE, OF THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD.)

To which is Appended,

AN ESSAY ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

BY THE

REV. J. CARRY,

B.D. OF BISHOP'S COLLEGE; INCUMBENT OF WOODBRIDGE, C. W.

Montreal :

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1863.

ESSAY ON THE DIACONATE.

In the late meeting of the Provincial Synod, the movement in favor of the restoration of the Diaconate, undeniably made considerable progress. There seemed to be a good deal of prejudice against it when it was brought in; but the subject was referred back to an enlarged Committee in a different tone of feeling: with a *hope*, I am sure, that something may be prepared before the next meeting of the Synod, which will meet the views of all parties. The former Committee sat only once, for a few minutes (so to speak), and that during the session of the Synod. They did no more, and could do no more, than adopt the report and canon submitted to them by their able, earnest, and indefatigable chairman, the late Rev. E. H. Dewar, M.A. (See Appendix A.)

It was his wish that I should succeed him in the chair of that Committee; and it was the pleasure of the Committee to entrust to me that responsibility; and also their desire that a meeting should be held, in the coming summer, in Canada West, as being most convenient to the majority of the committee. It is my intention, D. V., to call the Committee together accordingly. With a view both of expediting the business of the Committee when it meets, and also of eliciting, as far as possible, the view of the Canadian Church on the subject, I am induced to republish an Essay which appeared anonymously in the Ontario Episcopal Gazette, a few weeks before the meeting of the Synod, in the hope that more attention may be drawn to this all-important subject, and that the Committee may have the benefit of the suggestions of those who cannot be present at their meeting. The names and constitution of the Committee are appended. (See Appendix B.)

I have little doubt that any Member will have great pleasure in receiving suggestions from the brethren, whether Lay or Clerical, on both sides of the question. As Chairman, I feel it my duty to invite them; and I do so in the hope that something may be prepared next summer, to be probably then published, and reconsidered and remodelled, if necessary, by the Committee at some subsequent meeting previous to the next Provincial Synod.

In republishing this Essay, I would premise that I have no wish to dictate any particular line as the one to be pursued. My aim, in writing it, was two-fold,—to show the immense importance of the subject: and to demonstrate that a living permanent order of Deacons was not only a desideratum in the Church, but a possibility; and I ventured even so high as to assert (and I have no wish to retract the assertion) that the continued neglect and practical

abolition of the Diaconate in the Church, was a *sin the Church must answer for*, and that *its restoration here would be a glory to our Canadian Church*. It may perhaps be imagined that in proposing a plan for the restoration of the Diaconate, I believe, that my plan is *the plan*. Not so. But I do believe that the vital points to be considered are set forth there, and that wherever my Essay is read or discussed, the whole question will be well looked into.

Go with me a little while in imagination, and you will understand my views on the subject. Suppose an intelligent Dissenter to come to one of our Bishops and say, "I have read much, of late, of your Church, and have been led to look on it with great respect. I come to you to be made acquainted with its practical workings. I have been examining its liturgies and formularies, and am greatly delighted with them. The machinery for the working of the Church is very beautiful—so beautiful that I begin to feel that its origin is Divine. Now give me a little information about its working. You are the Bishop. Well. You have under your rule Priests and Deacons. Their ordination vows are very striking to one who has been a stranger to them, and they present a very thorough view, when combined, of ministerial work. Your Priests and Deacons, I am told, are mixed together; (for I had made some enquiry of others.) Tell me how many Priests have you?" The Bishop may be supposed to answer, some forty or fifty. "Forty: indeed; why I thought you had only about that number of Clergy altogether! The Deacons you have—so few as they must be—must have a great deal to do. I should have supposed you would have had at the very least a Deacon to each Priest ("to assist him in divine service. &c.; to search for the poor, sick, and impotent," &c.) It is a great work for a few Deacons to assist so many Priests." The Bishop answers, "No. I have only three Deacons in my Diocese! one † at P*N** and another at C** ministering in "parts adjacent also." The latter has three townships in his charge. The third is *all alone in Labrador!* In a few months they will be full Priests: and then I shall *not* (most likely) have any Deacons for a year or so. The Priests

† I am undisguisedly alluding here to the present state of our own Diocese of Quebec. Those who know me will not need to be told, and those who do not, will believe me, I hope, when I assure them that I am not intending the very slightest reflection on our saintly and most devoted Bishop, whom God has so lately taken to his Rest and to his Crown. I felt that to give my case weight, I must build on fact; and it seemed to me unfair for a clergyman of one Diocese to cross the orders of another, in order to point out defects.

do the Deacon's work themselves. They hint to me that they find it very hard to keep their promise to be 'diligent,' * * in such studies as help to the knowledge of the Scriptures, and I believe some of my Deacons have thought it hard (and indeed it is hard) that they, young, inexperienced men, placed suddenly in the sole charge of independent missions, should be expected* to undergo another examination, or any study for Priest's orders." I am afraid that our dissenting friend would go away from his visit to the Bishop with his feelings somewhat changed. "It certainly *did* look very perfect; but after all it is not so complete as I thought. I see that, after all, Church organization is not very much more thorough than ours."

Before proceeding to the Essay itself, I would premise still further one or two remarks.

In advocating a "permanent" Diaconate, I would call attention to the fact that there are obviously two meanings which the expression "permanent Diaconate" may carry. I mean to insist that the Order should be permanent, so that there never will be a time when the Order of Deacons is not found in full and sufficient numbers doing the work prescribed for Deacons in the Church. As for the other idea of a particular individual becoming a permanent Deacon or a Deacon all his life, that is a separate question, which is sufficiently treated of in the Essay. For the present I wish merely to observe that a Church may have a permanent order of Deacons without any of them being individually tied to remain permanent Deacons.

It is sometimes said, "Why bring this subject so prominently before us in Canada? Wait till the Mother Church has recovered her order of Deacons. Then, when we see the experiment succeed with her, it will be time enough for us to go to the work of restoration." This argument is taking and specious, but very unsound. Is it not a law of nature that changes, and fresh biases and impulses are most readily and with the least danger given in tender years, as well as most effectually? Train a tree, a dog, a man, a Church, or alter the system of its growth—when will you do it? When the tree overtops its fellows, or while it is still a tender sapling? When the dog begins to show greyhairs, or when he rolls about in unrestrained puppyhood? When the man—stay— We have this case disposed of by the Divine Wisdom. (Prov. xxii: 6.) And so it is with a Church. Our Mother Church is old, and fully grown. Change in her system is something unnatural. And our Mother Church is trammelled also by her relation to the state. As it was well said the other day in my presence in reference to a proposal of this nature, "You'll have Lord Palmerston down upon you in a moment." No. We are free to adopt what we conscientiously believe to be best without prohibition. And the *Mother Church will thank us for trying the experiment for her*. We can try it. (And yet can a man of faith doubt that, if God has appointed Deacons as an Order of the Ministry, [as the Church emphatically declares that He has] He will be pleased to give His blessing to the attempt to repair the breach which exists in the

walls of Sion, if the repair be set about in a spirit of humble dependence on that blessing?) We can try it, I say, in this youthful Church, without danger; and the experiment once proved a failure (!) can lay it aside without serious detriment; but She cannot. She not only looks with pride upon her Colonial Children, but conscious of their freedom from the shackles of habit, and prescriptive right, and old established customs, she looks to them sometimes to set her an example: to try those experiments which she and they alike know ought to be tried, and give her opportunity of adopting, as living realities, what emanated from herself as mere ideas.

It has been mentioned as a practical objection to the employment of an Order of Deacons such as is proposed in my Essay, that "the people would never respect them as fully as if they were Priests." I have no further answer to make than to concur in the opinion. It is exactly what we want, that there should be an Order of Deacons, distinguished by broad and strong lines of demarcation from our Priests; and that they should be held in lower estimation, or, which is better still, that our Priests should be thought even more highly of than they are at present.

It has also been suggested to me that there are weak points in my Essay: and a friendly hand pointed out one which might be considered such. Again I would reply that I do not expect my Essay to be looked upon as faultless: nor, for that matter, should I feel myself tied to advocate or adopt every idea which is contained in it. It was thrown off in order to do some pioneer work in a good cause: and as it first went forth so I leave it: adding only a few remarks and explanations now.

With one observation let me conclude this somewhat lengthy preface. It was my lot for several years after I came to this country (in 1845) to be present again and again at Ordinations, and it soon became very painful to me to listen to a Bishop demanding, and to Candidates undertaking, to do that which neither the Bishop expected the Candidate, nor the Candidate himself could intend, however willing he might be, to do. A considerable lapse of time has not made the feeling any the less painful.

"It is up hill work—writes a friend—battling with the *vis inertiae* of the mass. Still there is hope. One by one adherents come forward: and a true idea—a Christian one—cannot wholly die: cared for and nurtured by even a few careful hearts, it must ultimately succeed." Yes, *must*, if watered, as we trust, with the dew of the Divine blessing.

ESSAY ON THE DIACONATE.

The following Canon has been prepared by an individual, that it may be submitted to the Provincial Synod, in the absence of any known action of the Committee appointed to consider the subject, at the Synod held last September. It will be withheld if the Committee submit one of their own. It is offered to their acceptance if they will have it.

PROPOSED CANON.

Candidates for the office of Deacon (having received "faculties") may be admitted to that

* This objection has been more than once urged to myself by alumni of our own Diocesan College.

Order at the age of 21 years having first passed such examination as shall satisfy the Bishop, in the following subjects, viz.: the History, Antiquities, &c., of the Bible, and its Doctrines as interpreted by the Prayer Book (including the Articles in both languages); and also, an outline of Church History—regard being had especially to the period of the Reformation and to the History of the Church of England. No Deacon shall be admitted to the Order of the Priesthood, until he shall have attained the age of twenty-five years, nor then (ordinarily) unless he shall have first passed a satisfactory examination in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, together with such other subjects as the Bishop shall require. Nevertheless, a Bishop may, if he see fit, advance a Deacon to the Priesthood, after twenty-five years service in the Diaconate, without examination in Greek and Hebrew, if he shall have found him faithful, and shall judge that he has “purchased to himself a good degree.” No Deacon shall have any independent spiritual charge, but shall be subject to the direction and superintendence of such Priest as the Bishop shall place him under. It is desirable, that in places, where there is not full employment for Deacons in the particular methods set forth in the Ordinal, Deacons should be specially employed in the work of education. Deacons shall have no place in the Provincial Synod, but shall be admitted to the Diocesan Synods, under such conditions as the said Synods shall severally prescribe.

“Faculties.” This word is introduced with reference to the Preface of the Ordinal. The granting of faculties is a legal prerogative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. If we are tied by this legal provision as the Church is in England, “faculties” might easily be procured, and placed at the disposal of all Bishops in Canada. No doubt, His Grace would be ready to grant them in this way upon application from the Synod.

“Twenty-one years.” The circumstances of this country, and of this Church, demand admission to the Diaconate at an earlier age than twenty three. Other Professions are open to young men at an early age. It is highly expedient to place a much larger interval that at present exists, between the Diaconate and the Priesthood. The age of admission to the Diaconate has varied considerably: and there is no reason why the fixed age of twenty three should be regarded as unalterable. In Gibson’s Codex, Tit. VI. C. V. may be seen the following comment upon the age of twenty-three years. “The Rule in the Councils, (and in the Canon Law out of the Councils) is twenty-five; and a reason is there given for it from the Council of Toledo. *In veteri lege, ab anno vigesimo quinto Levitæ in tabernaculo servire mandantur.* This also became a rule of the English Church, but it was a case dispensable; and in the Church of Rome, not only the Council of Trent made it twenty-three, but the Pontifical, published about the time of our Reformation, made the age of a Deacon sufficient, if it was not under twenty. To this, our Church, in the time of Edward the VIth, added one, and is now come into the middle way, between the two extremes, viz., twenty-three; providing also a Faculty or dispensation for persons of

extraordinary abilities, to be admitted sooner.”

In the Sister Church of the U. S. the Diaconate is open at the age of twenty-one. A Bishop of that Church, who was ordained Deacon at twenty-one, told the writer a few days ago that it had been of incalculable value to him to have thus gained three years experience.*

“Articles in both languages.” This is what is meant, (is it not?) or meant principally, in the preface to the Ordinal, by the Deacon being found learned in the “Latin tongue.” But after all, is a knowledge of even Latin absolutely indispensable for a Deacon?

“Twenty-five years.” It is desirable to make the interval between the two Orders longer than it is, and more marked. The Priest who has gained experience, where only it can be attained, in the Diaconate, will be a much more efficient Minister, or Priest, and will be received as such by his flock, when he comes to have a charge. The following extract from the ‘Codex’ will relieve any extra-Conservative minds from difficulty in adopting this age.

“Four and twenty.” Anciently, the age was thirty, from our Saviour’s entering upon his ministerial Office at that age: *Dominus enim noster Jesus Christus trigesimo anno baptizatus est*: but the Canon Law, making an exemption to cases of necessity, and requiring no more than twenty five absolutely, that became the fixed age for the Order of Priesthood, and is so declared in the aforesaid Pontifical, and by the Council of Trent. But the methods of education being in these last days more quick and compendious than in former times, our Church has thought twenty-four sufficient with these limitations, (which are not in the Church of Rome with regard to twenty-five) that they shall be twenty-four complete (“full twenty-four” Ordinal); that there is no room left for dispensation; and that till they are admitted to the Order of the Priesthood, they are not capable of any benefice or ecclesiastical promotion.

The twenty-fifth year might, in most cases, be spent in College. The advantages of a year of calm study after 3 years of practical work, and of the influence of experienced men, becoming Students again, amongst, or at least in connection with, or in sight of, young Theological Students, would be immense.

“Hebrew.” Is it not the experience of every unfortunate Priest, who, like the writer, knows nothing or next to nothing, of the original language of the larger half of God’s own Word, that he cannot thoroughly exercise that office of the “Scribe instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven,” whom our Lord compares to “an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

“A Bishop may xxx advance a Deacon xxx without xx Greek and Hebrew.” It does not follow that because the Bishop may, he will.

* I have been a little misunderstood about the age at which admission should be opened to the Diaconate. Those whom I should wish to see admitted at twenty-one are those who are recognized as intended for the Priesthood. They require, I think, a much longer probation than one year. It would scarcely be desirable to admit to the Diaconate those who, practically, could not rise to the higher order, until they were old enough to know more of themselves, than men ordinarily know at twenty-one.

† This argument applies with great force to the modern Diaconate.

Yet there may be cases where he will "see fit" so as to reward faithfulness in the Diaconate. It is not necessary to there being a permanent Diaconate that any Deacon should be incapable of promotion; that would be contrary to the spirit of 2 Tim. iii. 13. quoted in the Canon.

Might not a period, or rather several periods of study be, in some cases, allowed to the Deacon during his first twelve years of service, if the Bishop considered him to have ability and energy to fit himself for examination in Greek and Hebrew. If he succeeded in the attempt, all well and good; if he did not he would still gain something, and the Church would gain something also. Those years of study had better be stated years, say the fourth, eighth, twelfth. A Deacon could not then importune his Bishop to advance him out of course.*

"No independent spiritual charge." The mischief of inexperienced young men being placed in independent charges is too well known, and too obvious, to need comment. All sensible young men, even after they have waited for admission to Holy Orders, till the age of 23, still desire to commence their ministerial duties (if it were possible) under some one who could advise and direct them.

Ought there not to be, at least, one Deacon to every Priest? In our country Parishes, where a Priest now spends so much time upon the road travelling from one Congregation to another, and thus loses a vast amount of time which might, and ought to be given to better things, e. g. prayer and study, and attention to his family (1 Tim. iii. 4. Compare Genesis xviii. 19, and Sam. iii. 13), a Deacon might be placed in every congregation.

One Priest might then have charge of half a dozen congregations, separated by distances of from 5 or 6 miles to 20 miles. Thus, the Priest might live, say at A, where he would have also his Deacon to assist him, and to "baptize and preach" (ordinal) "in his absence." The Priest then would spend one Sunday at home. He would hold, of course, two services, with the Holy Communion at A. At all the other stations the resident Deacons ("in the absence of the Priest") would hold also two services (a matter this of paramount importance.) The next Sunday the Priest spends at B, twenty miles off, where, as at home the Sunday before, he administers the Holy Communion, and catechizes the children. He leaves home to go to B, early on Saturday, and returns late on Monday, devoting two half days to visiting at B. Tuesday to Friday, he spends at home. The third Sunday is devoted to C and D in like manner. C is, say ten miles from A and five from D; D being twelve from A. The fourth Sunday he spends similarly at E: and so on.†

In the country then, there may be five or six

Deacons to each Priest. In towns, many parishes require a Deacon, and perhaps two to each Priest. If there happen to be two or three small congregations, they might be placed under the charge of one Priest, as suggested above in country parts; especially ought every Cathedral Church to have its staff of Deacons.

"Deacons xxx employed in the work of education." It is thought by some, and strongly denied by others, that Deacons might, in part at any rate, support themselves by the labour of their own hands.† Let it be assumed now that they may not do so—although some Priests' hands among us are coarse and rough from holding a plough, or wielding a mattock—still seeing that "it appertaineth to the Office of a Deacon" "to instruct the youth in the Catechism;" that numbers of Priests are employed in the work of education (secular as well as religious); and they are appointed to the Office of (even secular) Teachers by Bishops in some cases, while in other cases Bishops have held, and hold, the office of teacher themselves, with the approval of the body of the Church; that "aptness to teach" is a Ministerial (not mere Diaconal) qualification (1 Tim. iii. 2. and 2 Tim. ii. 24). A Deacon may certainly be employed in teaching: he will thus be enabled partly to earn his own living. And, who is going to calculate the blessing to the Christian world (yea: even to the unchristian world) of having a large body of Deacon schoolmasters? It would be one of the noblest works that any Bishop could do, to inaugurate such a body, in the vineyard over which the Lord has placed him to preside.

This is already, a lengthy Essay. The importance and the largeness of the subject, require length. There is yet more to be said. There are some objections to be examined. Without such examination, these suggestions would be perhaps, summarily dismissed as not practical. Thus,

It is asked, how are Deacons to be supported? Take first the country case we have proposed—there are Clergymen, suppose, at A, at B and C, and at D: three Clergymen, wearing out, not merely their horses and harness, but their hearts and spirits, in toiling continually on the road from one Church and congregation to another.

Now one Priest and four Deacons would serve them all, as has been shewn above, better than the 3 Priests (for there would be always 2 services on each Sunday at each Church), and at no more cost! It is allowed that £150 should be the minimum of a Priest's salary. The salary of three Priests would be then £450. Now, as the Priest has need of a very much larger salary than the Deacon (He has travelling expenses, which the Deacon need not; he ought to have many expensive books which the Deacon need not, &c. &c.), of those £450, £200 might be allotted to the Priest, and £50 (i. e. another £200) to the Deacons, and there would be £50 "to the good." The Deacon's salary need not be fixed at £50; it should range from £50 to £100. His labour as a schoolmaster would

* This is the spot which was pointed out to me as weak. I will only say here, that this one point, or any other one point, may be struck out without seriously injuring the system advocated in the essay, as a whole.

† When the Clergy hold services at out-stations once a month, or once a fortnight, do they not often partly defeat their own object? They create a desire for the ministrations of religion; then there steps in a self-appointed teacher to take advantage of the deficiency thus brought home to the hearts of the people. Surely, as often as the Lord's Day recurs, the Lord's Service should be offered in every congregation by some one, carrying some shew of lawful authority.

† There are many instances, I would fain believe, in which, in a country so destitute of the ministrations of religion, as parts of Canada are, Diaconal authority might be very advantageously committed to Medical men. There are many such of good standing, God be thanked, who are sincere Christian men.

surely be worth another £50! Take a harder looking case. Suppose there is a Clergyman at A, another for B, C, a third at D, and a fourth for E. F. G. Seven stations, and four Clergymen at £150 each—their salaries produce an aggregate of £600. One Priest for the circuit, would receive £200, seven Deacons £50 each; and, as before, there is £50 to spare. This plan would be very available also, where the Church is occupying new ground.

So in town, there are offices connected with our Churches; there are national and other schoolmasterships, there are fees for registrations, &c., &c., all of which might be made to furnish support for Deacons—the real interests of the Church gaining, not losing, by the transfer. Further, let any faithful Clergyman in a town parish (if they are not faithful, they had better not be there) say from his pulpit—"I am overworked, or, I cannot properly work my parish as things are now arranged: I am called away from the 'word of God' to 'serve tables—I want a Deacon (say, if you like, I want two Deacons) to help me"—the chances are that his Wardens will meet him in his Vestry, and guarantee him the £100 (or £200,) which are needed, if he can find the persons to fill the office. Certainly his congregation will be willing to bear the necessary additional burthen. The Laity are not backward to come to the rescue—show them that the case is good, and the necessity real, and you may count upon their support. A faithful Pastor makes a faithful congregation, and a willing one.

It is said that the experiment of establishing a permanent order of Deacons has been tried, and failed. The experiment alluded to was made in a prominent English Diocese. The Bishop took pains to educate a number of men for Deacons—to be ordained and remain Deacons for life. His Priests were to be taken from the Universities as before. Now, having educated his men for the Diaconate, so that they were as well prepared for Ministerial work, as men who came from Oxford and Cambridge, as far as theology was concerned at any rate, perhaps better than many; he ought not to have expected that they would be content to remain in the lower order long—nor was it just that they should. This I believe was the simple fact; but I write merely from memory, and may perhaps be quite mistaken.

It is said that Deacons will not be content to remain Deacons. Not, if there be merely a solitary Deacon here and there in the Church; his case is disagreeably exceptional, and causes him to be continually talked of, and pointed to. But whenever there shall be a large body of Deacons in their Church, when their status is determined, and their value recognized—when, in short, they feel and the Church feels, that the Deacons are in fact an Order, all this discontent will gradually and utterly die away.

It is said again that the work required by the Church can be better done by other machinery than the Diaconate,—by lay readers, catechists, district visitors, &c. It is said to hear such things. Do we believe that Deacons are an order instituted by CHRIST OUR LORD through his Apostles—an order which our Church declares upon the authority of the Scripture and universal Church history to have

ever been in the Church, and shall we presume to supersede it by merely human appointments? This is a very solemn matter. The Church professes publicly her belief that Deacons are a Divine Order. She sets forth most plainly their duties in unmistakable terms, and yet, (is it more than fact to say?) she has not one Deacon to shew who is engaged in doing that work? Is not such a state of things a state of *sinful disobedience* to the Lord, on the part of his spouse?

It will be answered, Look at the present prosperous condition of the Church. What, then? Look a little farther back to the dull and lethargic state which preceded it. What, under God's blessing, has redeemed the Church from that position? What but (one may call it) the revival of the Order of Bishops. Go on now. Revive the third Order. Under the same Divine blessing, which is wont to be poured out more abundantly than either (alas!) we desire or deserve, may we not hope, may we not expect, that the multiplication of sects, which has been both the plague and the shame of our Reformed Church, will cease, and that her strayed children will gradually return back to the fold. If the Church is prospering now—and God be thanked she is—will she not be doubly prosperous when she has ALL HER HOLY ORDERS "in strong and beauteous order ranged." First, let us have the ministerial offices complete, which are clearly appointed by our Divine head; then if we find occasion for other supplementary human institutions, lay readers, catechists, Sunday school teachers, and the like, by all means add them; but do not substitute them. Christ, the Head, knows better what His Spouse, the Church, requires, than she does herself.

Once more it will be said—After all, let well alone—all changes are troublesome and inconvenient. A good rule that, Let well alone, when all is well. Is it well, when children, (agreeable, nice children it may be, yet) disobey their parents? Is it well, when the Church neglects the order of her Divine Head, and witnesses against herself every time her Chief Pastors lay hands upon a (so-called) Deacon, that she is unfaithful? What if changes are troublesome and inconvenient? What is human life but an aggregate of troubles and inconveniences? The man who lives to himself may hug his comforts and cling to his enjoyments. But life, real life, the life of the man who serves his generation,—is that ever free from toil and self-sacrifices? It is a troublesome work, which lies before the Church to perform. It cannot be accomplished except with due time, and by patience, and by perseverance. But, if it be God's work, let none be daunted; let us set about it heartily, believing, in the spirit of Gamaliel, that what is of God cannot be overthrown.

Other objections might be brought forward. Only one more, which will suggest itself against the plan here proposed for employing Deacons need be noticed. It will be said that the Deacons, being also schoolmasters, will not have time to give to both offices. If the Deacon were a Professor of a College, whose duties require that he should be all the while an energetic student himself, there might be force in the objection. But the Deacon's teaching being elementary, would be just so many hours work per-

day, probably six : his teaching once over, he would be free. He would have no labour in preparing sermons; "homilies," or sermons prepared by others, would be put into his hands. (See Ordinal.) He would have only five days teaching in a week, that, like others, he might enjoy that rest of one day in seven, which is the inheritance of the whole human race. With these restrictions, his time would not be so occupied but that he might give nearly half of it to the other works prescribed for Deacons.

To this somewhat lengthened Essay the poet's words will be a not unsuitable conclusion—

*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti: si non his utere.*

The writer will consider himself well repaid for his labour, if it produces any better plan, or if it tends to advance by even one little step, the all-important work of the Revival of the Diaconate.

APPENDIX A.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DIACONATE.

PROVINCIAL SYNOD, 1862.

Your Committee presume that every member of this House will concur in the opinion that the crying need of the Church in Canada, and indeed, to a less extent, of the Mother Church, is the insufficiency in the number of her Inferior Ministers. Every one feels the want of an increased ministerial agency, as well in our crowded cities as in the country missions, where a comparatively small population is often scattered over a vast extent of country.

To supply this want two schemes present themselves for our consideration. One is to make the Diaconate not, as now, a mere stepping-stone to the Priesthood, but a permanent Order. The other is to employ a lay agency, under the title of Sub-Deacon or Reader.

To effect the first it would be necessary to lower the standard of qualifications for candidates for Deacons' orders. Your Committee are well aware that strong objections have been made to this; but they conceive that all such objections are more than outweighed by the consideration, that on the other hand it would bring into the ministry of the Church many able and pious men from the middle classes of Society, the very men who frequently become Dissenting Preachers, not from hostility to the Church, but because the Church offers them no work to do.

Another objection has been raised, to the effect that it would not be possible to find a sufficient number of men who would be willing to take the name and duties of Clergymen while they would be expected permanently to fill an inferior office. To this it may be replied that this objection is valid under present circumstances, but that it would cease to exist as soon as there is a large body of Deacons, whose position is defined and value recognized; in fact, as soon as the Diaconate once more becomes an Order. We do not find that a

similar objection deters men from entering other professions; nor indeed do they refuse to become Priests because they have no expectation of becoming Bishops. It is not, however intended absolutely to cut off all Deacons from the hope of rising to the Priesthood. They may still "purchase to themselves" the higher step, by "giving good proof of their ministry."

And in connection with this part of the subject two advantages suggest themselves, which may result from the adoption of this scheme, both of which have long been very generally felt to be desirable. The first of them, is that the standard of qualifications for the higher order of the Priesthood might be materially raised; and the second, that the time during which all Deacons should remain such, might be considerably extended.

Your Committee proceed to notice another objection, and one which they are well aware, presents some grave practical difficulty. It is argued, namely, that while it would be difficult to raise funds for the remuneration of such Deacons, they would, after all, cost nearly as much as many priests. In reply to this, it must not however be forgotten that the question is not entirely one of comparative cost, but rather this: How can we best strengthen the Church, and extend her influence in those classes, where her influence is at present least felt? How can she best retain her hold upon the thousands who every year come to this country as Churchmen, but gradually drop off from the Church, because she provides for them no adequate supply of spiritual food? How can she best regain those who have wandered from her fold, but still in their hearts own allegiance to her authority? In answering these questions, we cannot ignore the fact, that if the Redeemer has instituted a system for His Church, that system must of necessity be better than any which human wisdom can devise; and that that Branch of the Church which ignores or neglects any part of that system cannot be expected adequately to accomplish the great work committed to it. "It is evident," says our Prayer-book, "unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." If this statement is true, it is equally true that in the Canadian Church, we may almost say in the whole Anglican Church, there is at the present day practically no Order of Deacons. May this not in a great measure account for the fact that such large numbers of the lower classes have either left the Church, to swell the ranks of dissent, or are living as nearly like infidels and heathens as is possible in a Christian land. During several generations the Church of England neglected to provide for an extension of the Episcopate in those vast Colonies to which her children were carrying her laws, her language, and her pure faith; and the fatal consequences, in the prevalence of heresies, the multiplication of sects, and the alienation of vast numbers of her people, became but too apparent. During the last thirty years she has made great efforts to repair this neglect; and the result, under God's blessing, is visible in the comparatively prosperous con-

dition of the Colonial Churches. May we not believe that a revival of the Diaconate, by which the Church would have all her Holy Orders restored to her, would make her doubly efficient and doubly prosperous? In reference, however, to the question of expense, your committee would suggest that it is not necessary that Deacons should be entirely debarred from pursuing secular callings. It is of course desirable that their time should be given, as much as possible, to the work of the ministry. But there are already many clergymen, even in the higher Order of the Priesthood, who are engaged in public or private tuition, and some who are compelled to seek an addition to their incomes by farming; and there would seem to be no valid reason why Deacons should not in part provide for their own necessities by laboring with their own hands. The extent to which this principle may safely be carried must be left to the discretion of the Bishop, according to the circumstance of each separate case.

But while your Committee thus recommend the revival of the third Order of Ministry, they do not think that it would be at all inconsistent with the continuance, wherever it may be found desirable or necessary, of a system of lay agency, which has already been employed in this country.

Your Committee recommend that a Canon annexed to this Report be adopted by this House, and respectfully submitted to the Upper House, for their concurrence.

All which is respectfully submitted,

EDWARD H. DEWAR, M. A.,

Chairman.

Canon on the Diaconate.

1. Candidates for the Office of Deacon shall undergo such examination as may satisfy the Bishop of the Diocese that they are well versed in the Holy Scriptures (in the vulgar tongue,) the Liturgy, Offices, and Articles of the Church, and on Outline of Church History, regard being had especially to the period of the Reformation, and the History of the Church of England.

2. No Deacon shall be admitted to the Priesthood until he shall have served as Deacon at least three years, and have passed a satisfactory examination in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and have further complied with such conditions as the Bishop of each Diocese may require. Nevertheless a Bishop may, if he think fit, advance a Deacon to the Priesthood after twenty years service in the Diaconate, without such additional qualifications.

3. No Deacon shall have any independent spiritual charge, and no Deacon shall officiate in any parish or congregation without the express consent of the Incumbent; nor in any case, without the assent of the Bishop, and when so officiating he shall be entirely subject to the direction of the Incumbent in all his ministrations.

APPENDIX B.

Rev. Canon Bancroft, Rev. Dr. Nicolls, Rev. H. Roe, Rev. W. Bettridge, Rev. Dr. Boomer, Rev. Dr. Short, Rev. D. Lindsay, Rev. C. Forrest, Ven. Archdeacon Brough, Rev. Provost of Trinity College, Rev. W. Bleasdel, Ven. Archdeacon Lauder, Hugh Taylor, Esq., Rev. A. J. Woolryche, B. T. Morris, Esq., Dr. Bovell, Hon. Judge McCord, W. P. Simpson, Esq., Rev. Dr. Caulfield, Ven. Archdeacon of Toronto.

APPENDIX C.

A VOICE FROM WITHOUT.

THE DIACONATE.

We have been particularly struck with the following admirable article, in the *Toronto Globe*, of the 27th Sept. last, and insert it for the benefit of our readers. Our contemporary has fallen into a mistake by supposing that the Deacons are merely laymen—they are the first Order of the Ministry:—*Editor Ontario Episcopal Gazette.*

"The Provincial Synod of the Church of England have had under discussion a proposition, the importance of which, as regards the Church herself, it is almost impossible to exaggerate. It is also one in which the community at large must feel great interest. The Episcopalian Church in Canada is a powerful body; its foundations are firmly fixed in the land; its members are numerous, influential and intelligent. This being the case, any measure calculated legitimately to increase its usefulness must be looked upon with interest by all, no matter to what denomination they may belong.

"But notwithstanding the progress the Church of England has made, many of her members, and many of her well-wishers in other churches, have felt that there has been an element wanting in her ministrations, which has impeded her progress and limited her usefulness. She has been too exclusive. She took as her model the Church of England, a wealthy ecclesiastical organization, supported by the State and existing in a thickly settled country. It is not our place to discuss the question whether the Church of England is an exact transcript of that which existed in the times of the Apostles or not. All we know is that it has not the form best calculated to gain influence in Canada, where it has but small State revenue to depend upon, where the people are comparatively poor, where the population is sparse, and where it has to enter into the contest upon nearly equal terms with other sects. The voluntary principle and independence of the State have necessitated certain modifications, without which the Church would certainly cease to exist. To meet the new wants occasioned by the change of circumstances, the congregations send lay representatives to the Synods, by whose votes, conjointly with those of the Clergy, the Bishops are elected. This was a step in advance; and, however much its result may have been dreaded when first it was taken, we apprehend all must admit that its success has been as great

as the best friends of the Church could desire. It has brought her members closer around her; it has given the most talented of her children an opportunity to exert themselves for her advancement; and it has created an interest in her doing that formerly was almost entirely wanting. Shorn of her temporal power, the Church could inflict no harm on her members, so that she did not require looking after on that account, and as there was little work for laymen to do, everything was left to the Clergy. Now one of the great causes of the rapid advances made by other denominations consists in this—that they excite an active interest among their members by giving them something to do, by investing them with some share of power, by providing them with a mission, be it ever so small, which they take a pride in performing. The Church of England in Canada has felt the truth of this by her increased strength and usefulness since she has been popularized by the introduction of the elective system: and there is now pending a proposition for further decentralization, which, though for the present it has been laid on the shelf, is so manifestly advantageous, and has upon its side such able advocates, that in the end it will certainly prevail.

"Hitherto the Church has been very particular from whom she has received help. While other Churches have ever been ready to press into their service godliness and learning wherever found, the Anglican has persistently refused to allow the gospel to be preached by any layman. In her worship of forms she has excluded from her pulpits all those who have not gone through the prescribed course of Divinity and the conventional quantity of Latin and Greek. We are by no means among those who hold that an uneducated Christian can, as a general rule, preach the truth as well or as effectually as the learned Christian; but this we are compelled to acknowledge, that there are many men who know not Greek from Latin, or Hebrew from either, who possess a natural capacity for speaking far superior to the learned Rector or the polished Dean. But for these men there is now no room in the English Church. No matter how devout, no matter how well able to instruct

others in the Gospel, if they have not gone through the prescribed University course, they must either keep their lips closed, or join some other religious body; and this in face of the fact that there are large districts of country where the authorized pastor is never seen, or which he is seldom able to visit.

"It is now proposed to remedy this defect by employing laymen to preach, to gather congregations around them, and to perform most of the functions of the regular Clergymen. An acquaintance with the Scriptures, with the doctrines of the Church, and some knowledge of ecclesiastical history will be required, but the "course" through which they have to pass, will be much more limited than that of the man who aspires to the Priesthood. Whether they would earn their livelihood entirely by their ministrations would depend mainly upon themselves. Some might do this, while others would still work during a portion of their time at their trades. And thus, in the opinion of its advocates, the office of the Diaconate would be restored to the position it occupied in the primitive Church.

"We do not pretend to look at this matter as Churchmen. We have merely asked if it would be likely to advance the cause of a denomination which we believe, in spite of prelacy and trac-tarianism, to be doing good in the land. And we think it would. The deacons would undoubtedly conduce as much to the prosperity and growth of the Anglican Church, as the local preachers have done to that of the Methodist Church. Though the proposition has been laid aside until the next meeting of the Provincial Synod, during the three years which must intervene, it will doubtless be agitated in the Diocesan Synods, and from the talent and influence of the gentlemen, both Clerical and Lay, who advocate it, it must ultimately triumph. The very agitation of such a question shows a great advancement in the ideas of Churchmen. We are glad to see, too, that it is not supported exclusively either by "high" or "low", but that both parties are divided, though if anything those who have generally the reputation of being high-churchmen are loudest in its favour."

APPENDIX D.

THE DIACONATE NEEDED AS A REAL MINISTRY.

An Essay read at the April Meeting of the Clerical Association of the Home District, held at the Rev. W. Belt's, Scarborough: By the Rev. J. Carry, B.D. (Bishop's College, Lennoxville.)

Proposed by the Rev. Dr. Beaven seconded by the Rev. Mr. Grant, and carried,—

"That the Rev. Mr. Carry be requested to publish his excellent Essay on the Diaconate in one of the Church papers with a view to awaken attention among Churchmen to the subject, and to elicit further discussion of it."

H. B. OSLER, Secretary.

Of the wants of the Provincial Church in the present day, perhaps the most grievously felt, and the most clamorously expressed is the want of those "who labour in the word and doctrine." This is the burden of many of our appeals to the Laity, and therefore, I need not stay to insist upon it as a fact. It is heartily admitted on all hands, that the number of the Clergy is out of all proportion small, compared with the work to be done; and the more thoughtful among the Clergy and Laity alike deplore the mournful consequences. If we go to the *newer settlements* we find our people often for the first ten years wholly destitute of Church ministrations; and, as they are in a large measure emigrants, who are not acquainted with the circumstances of the Church in this Province, and who expect the same ministrations to some extent, that they were accustomed to in the old world, without exertion on their part; a feeling of indignation not at all unnatural, as it arises from ignorance, springs up in their hearts, against what they deem the unkind and unjust neglect of the Canadian Church and her authorities. This feeling is aggravated by seeing the activity, and the numerous officials among them of various religious denominations; and perhaps the flame of discontent is not unfanned by the taunting reminders of their neglected and isolated condition, made by their neighbours of a different spiritual household. Thus are great numbers prepared to become bitter apostates from the Church. I feel confident that such of my brethren as have had much experience of country missions will justify this statement.

But where there is no such bitter origin of defection, the defection advances none the less. However revolting it may be to contemplate the wretched superstitions of the world,

there is yet one element of comfort in the survey—and that is, the assurance which they afford of man's spiritual nature; that he is allied to God, and that *religion is a necessity*. It is impossible then, but that our brethren of the backwoods, destitute of the services they loved, without the protecting presence of their Spiritual Mother, should contract new religious ties, and that out of the very necessity of their nature, out of the irrepressible craving of their souls; and particularly when those cravings would find a real satisfaction in the many blessed truths, and in the real worship of what we all most firmly believe to be defective systems of Christian doctrine, and defective expressions of Christian worship. When thus transplanted, the transference of affections, too, becomes in time complete, and the converts of necessity are content, or even more. And in after years, when the Church Missionary comes in like an intruder, one can hardly hope—some may not even think it right to wish—that ties so formed should be broken. Though such are lost to the Church—except in so far as all that is true and good is of her—they are not lost to God. But there is a sadder case. Those who did not urgently feel their spiritual necessities (always the greater number) would stand aloof from the existing worships, and perhaps make their attachment to the Church the pretext for doing so, till they were hardened in religious indifference, and almost hopelessly dead to spiritual impressions. And this miserable residuum left by the canker-worm of irreligion affords the chief part of the nucleus of a future congregation, which from motives well known, but not by any means of the most spiritual character, seek the presence of a resident Clergyman. Alas! what a lavish and too unprofitable outlay of pains and prayers has been often made upon such an unpromising soil, many of my brethren well know. Thus it is that we not only lose *multitudes* in the new grounds—many of whom are wholly lost to God, but we lose *prestige* too; we acquire as a Church, a reputation for lack of spiritual life and character, and so it becomes more difficult to maintain our ground against the many sects, whom we are in sadness compelled to call hostile. We make the future work also enormously difficult, by allowing a whole generation to grow up without any religious training, or with a sectarian one.

Of the paucity of Clergy in the settled charges I shall only say—that the work of a pastor cannot in numerous cases be adequately discharged. The Shepherd of souls cannot "call his own sheep by name; families can be visited in some large charges, not oftener than once or twice a year, and how then can individuals be trained and guided to perfection? That tender and solemn charge of our Re-

deemer—"Feed my lambs," *cannot* in the vast majority of cases receive more than the shadow of observance, if even so much.

These are the consequences of the lack of labourers which we complain of. The importance of fully apprehending those consequences must be my excuse for so long an introduction.

We are now to inquire what prospect there is of remedying this state of things. The remedy, I think, cannot be found while we continue to follow strictly our present system of employing none in Ministerial duties but persons of Academical education. This is easily demonstrated. The existing number of Clergy fully doubled would not more than meet our positive wants. Undoubtedly, so large an increase, or even much less, would create a wonderful feeling of relief, and for some time would put an end to all complaining; but it would not more than meet actual wants; and we are now considering not how a temporary relief may be obtained, but in what way a full and permanent provision may be made for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Now, let me ask, is there the remotest probability of increasing twofold the present relation of the number of the Clergy to the Laity, within the next fifty years? I see none judging from the past history of the British Provinces and the American Church.* We know that but a small proportion of our present clergy are *entirely* supported by the people—not more, perhaps, in this Diocese than *one-third*, and in the newer Dioceses, and in those of Eastern Canada, a still smaller proportion. Yet we are straitened to do so much. But if our numbers were doubled, then *four-thirds* of the Clergy would have to be supported by voluntary contributions—i. e. the Church would have to raise a sum not very far from *four times* what it does at present. And can it be believed that there is any likelihood of this being done? Oh, that the hearts of our people were enlarged—for then it could; but to bring about the high state of spiritual cultivation and productiveness required for this, the means themselves are wanting. Any very serious advance, in the *proportion* of religious contributions, we are not justified in speedily expecting—much less their *quadrupling*.

Can we do nothing, then? or nothing that will render our available resources more effective for good? Despair, certainly, is no part of our creed, and should be no part of our practice. If we find our present system not

meeting the requirements of the Church, should we not bethink ourselves of going back to first principles, and ask ourselves, *Are we doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way—or in our own?* For God's work, He has Himself created agencies, and prescribed the manner in which they are to be used. Now the chief agency for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, is the *Holy Ministry*—itself a Divine gift, and its powers given of God. This is a treasure not to be impaired, but to be jealously guarded. If any part of this agency, or any of its powers should be lost, the fault is ours; for the Divine Author of the ministry intended it to endure "till we all come to a perfect man." Of this the Church of England is fully convinced as a *theory*. Witness her Ember prayer: "Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, who of thy *divine providence* hast appointed *Divers Orders* in Thy church." Witness the whole Ordinal—Witness the countless volumes of polemics which maintain the three Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, against all sectaries. *We have the Ministry*—but have we it *as* God intended it should be *used*? In several points I believe we have *not*. I shall confine the following observations to the Order of Deacons. This order we have but do we use it *orderly*?

To answer this question we must inquire what are the *duties* and *powers* belonging to this Order. Now this inquiry is fully met by the Ordinal of the English Church in the following words: "It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in divine Service; and *specially* when he ministereth the Holy Communion, to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his office, when provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishoners, or others." In this statement our Prayer Book is a perfect daguerreotype of primitive doctrine and usage. The learned investigations of the most competent and trustworthy explorers of Christian antiquity, through of different Schools of doctrine, such as Neander, Bingham, and Suicer, conduct us to the same result, tallying completely with our Ordinal. They represent the Deacon as not allowed to celebrate Baptism (ordinarily) or the Eucharist, nor to preach (in our modern sense.) The preaching so frequently ascribed to them was of a literal sort—the giving of public notices and directions in Divine Service. they instructed Catechumens, they read the Gospel, they assisted in the celebration of the Sacraments. and they had the management of the temporalities of the Church entrusted to them in a great degree. But to teach publicly, they were not allowed. Only in "cases of exigence," says Bingham, they might read the Homilies of the Fathers.

We boast of antiquity—are our Deacons after this ancient model? Emphatically, No! The

* The official reports of all the Dioceses at the General Convention of 1859, show that at that time about 1400 parishes enjoyed the full services of one or more Clergymen; 300 parishes had only half services, or less; leaving about 400 parishes vacant! And though both Clergy and Laity have increased since 1859, the proportions have probably not changed, except perhaps, for the worse, by the removal of so many pastors from the parish to the camp. During the 15 years, from 1841 to 1859, our parishes, pastors, and people were just about doubled, while the candidates for Orders increased *in less than half the same ratio*. When to keep pace with the growth of the church, they ought to have been 400, they were less than 300! From 1830 to 1840, our Clergy increased at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum. But from 1850 to 1860 the rate of increase was less than 4 per cent. per annum!

From Report of "Society for the increase of the Ministry."

Deacon of the English Church differs from the Priest in but three particulars, so far as the performance of ministerial duties is concerned; viz, he cannot celebrate the Eucharist, he cannot absolve, he cannot bless. But he is continually put in care of souls, entrusted with large and important shares of missionary labour, on exactly the same conditions as the Priest; though this is expressly against the Ordinal, in which we clearly see the deacon is *not* intrusted with care of souls. While in the Office for the ordaining of Priests, this main idea runs through the whole, and receives the most awfully solemn and distinct recognition. I maintain, then, our practice is against our theory as set forth in the Prayer Book, and against the example of that antiquity to which we make such confident appeals in behalf of our ministry. It is easy to say that we have the three Orders, including the Diaconate; but it is as easy to answer with inconvertible truth, that we have it as the Romish Church has the Scriptures—and not otherwise, i. e. we have it but do not use it aright; nor would it be an unpardonable hyperbole to say—at all. With reference to all those works which peculiarly belong to the Diaconate, that Order practically does not exist. A Diocese with us may be a year without half a dozen Deacons even in name, and may be forever without one in reality. Contrast this with the primitive Church. It is true that for the first ages a sort of prejudice confined the number of Deacons in each church to *seven*; but this was seen to be unreasonable, and accordingly in the sixth century we find a *hundred* deacons in the principal church of Constantinople, and at a little latter period *one hundred and fifty*. In any organized body, civil, military, or religious, the absurdity is obvious of having the higher ranks vastly outnumbering the inferior—as in the Yankee militia of peace times all were colonels, or as in our church, in which the specially *assisting* ministry is “nowhere.” Every one knows what various orders of inferior attendants waited on the Temple-service, and even in the Synagogue. The primitive Church had a pretty long list of ministering classes.* So has the Latin Church. So has almost every Protestant sect that is making a mark upon society. But “dignity” is our idol. Our lowest ministers must be “scholars and gentlemen.” The church is dying of dignity,” said the American Bishop Griswold—strange; when she is not sick of it yet!

If the Rubric prefixed to the Office for the Ordaining of Deacons were insisted on, “When the day appointed by the Bishop is come, after morning prayer is ended, there shall be a Sermon or Exhortation declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted Deacons; how necessary that Order is in the church of Christ, and also how the people ought to esteem them in their office;” if this were insisted on, how nonplussed would be the most ingenious amongst us to reconcile our practice with the belief of the necessity which we proclaim. I am bold to say, and I am safe from contradiction, that if a Deacon be no more than he is in

the Diocese of Toronto, we can do quite as well without this office, and it seems a profanity and a mockery to talk of it as a Divine Order and necessary. Were our candidates at once admitted to the Presbyterate—supposing that possible—what conceivable difference would it make in the aspect of the Church or in the work done? Would the mass of the Laity even notice the change?

I do not now ask, Have we the ministry given by the Lord Jesus? but I do ask, Are we using it as He designed and as the Apostolic and primitive Church has set us the example? And if we are not, can it be possible to do effectually the work of the ministry without the fullness of the ministry,—if any of its parts be maimed, or its labours not properly directed? Our first Provincial Synod gives a decided negative.

Our next enquiry must be how to make this Holy Order, so long in practical abeyance, a reality—a living power: how, almost literally, to revive it.

While positive in what I have already stated I would speak with becoming hesitation as to the remedy. But the Diaconate, I conceive; may be restored in two forms.

First. There might be a class of Deacons wholly separated to sacred ministration, and paid from the common revenues of the church and this class should, I think, be as large as possible. Then as to their qualifications; since the peculiar duties of the Deacon as set forth in the Ordinal, require little or (to speak correctly) no scholastic learning, we need look for no more than good sense, well attested piety and such a competent knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, the Prayer Book, and Theology in general, as an ordinary English Education will enable any one, with Divine assistance, to obtain. Most assuredly it is quite as much in our power to obtain men of this class for deacons, as it is for the Methodist body to secure them for preachers. These latter, too, are obliged reasonably enough, to go through a course of English Divinity, in private reading, during the first four years of their ministry, on which they are from time to time examined by proper persons. And who can say that such a person as I have described is not apt or meet for the duties of a deacon as laid down in the Ordinal? Can he not assist the Priest in Divine service? Can he not aid in distributing the elements in the Holy Communion? Can he not read Scriptures and Homilies in the church? Are there not scores of lay readers and catechists doing this? Can he not instruct the youth in the catechism? Are there not thousands of Sunday School Superintendents with less knowledge than we presuppose doing this with acceptance and earning the thanks of the clergy and the whole church? Does it require Greek and Philosophy to enable a Deacon to baptize infants in the absence of the Priest? And as for these offices of temporal charity to the sick, poor, and impotent people are there not many lay people, men and women, with no learning other than the loving instinct of the heart, endeavouring to do this in an imperfect irregular way, in all our large towns and cities? And shall a Divine and formal commission render one of these charitable souls less competent to those

* Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, A. D. 254, in Euseb. H. E. Book VI., states the Roman clergy to be 46 Presbyters, 7 Deacons, 42 Acolytes, 52 Exorcists, Sectors and Porters.

good works? Or shall a Layman without learning be able to do well what a Deacon cannot do without literature and science? The only duty which a Deacon may not discharge effectually without some degree of learning, is that of preaching; and this we must admit does not necessarily pertain to his office. However there often is great aptitude for wise and effective preaching when there is little learning of a scholastic or formal sort—often far more than any amount of mere learning can furnish. And where natural talents, prudence, and piety concur—then it would be well if unlearned Deacons were licensed by the Bishop to preach.

If in a large tract of new country an experienced Deacon was set down with a number of such Deacons, to superintend their work, (and for a couple of years perhaps their readings,) so that they should be really assistants to the Priest and not themselves intrusted with independent care of souls, what a new and glorious future would be in store for our Church! The new ground would be by us preoccupied and cultivated. Speedily would settled congregations be organized, and that before the people were demoralized by schism, disheartened by neglect, or hardened by irreligion. Such of those Deacons too as had been thoroughly proved, and had honourably "purchased to themselves a good degree," would with justice and advantage be raised to that degree.

To this class of subordinate labours, the Deacons who proceed from our Colleges, and aspire immediately to the Priesthood, should for the twelve months of their Diaconate be somewhat strictly, if not rigidly confined.

Second—But there is another form which the Diaconate may assume with advantage—a *local and more secular form*. I would have persons of discreet age, of fair intelligence, and whose integrity and piety would command the suffrages of their respective congregations, admitted to the Diaconate, in its most limited and strictly defined character. Such deacons should assist the Priest in Divine Service by reading lessons and prayers, administering the elements, superintending Sunday Schools, baptizing or burying in the Priest's absence; and on the Sundays on which the Priest is absent, they should read prayers and a sermon, as Lay Readers do now. And what farmer or blacksmith—not to mention schoolmasters, merchants, doctors or lawyers,—is not competent to do all this? What learning or intellect is requisite for it? But were it done, how mightily would our few overtasked Priests be supplemented, how blessedly would our poor desolate half starved congregations be strengthened and enriched? I wish it to be particularly noted, that with the exception of assisting in the Sacraments, every ministry I have named is discharged by laymen at the present time. Why, then, should not those services be performed by Deacons? Or, can man's way of lay-catechists and lay-readers be better than God's way of commissioned servants? These local and secular Deacons, as they might be called, present the advantage of being almost everywhere attainable and inexpensive. There are not many congregations in which materials for a suitable Deacon could not be found—a person who would gladly on Sundays and

spare week-day hours, render valuable help. Nor would they think of receiving anything for their labours of love. "The Deacons," (of the Nestorian Christians) says Mr. Fletcher, an English Clergyman, who resided long in the East, "rarely receive anything, as they are generally merchants and men of business, from whom the Canons of the East do not require the surrender of their worldly calling, unless they wish to advance to the higher grade of the Priesthood." The details of the plans here suggested could doubtless be settled in a manner so wise and cautious, as to obviate as much as possible, whatever evils might inhere in such methods, or might arise temporarily from their novelty.

Let me here meet an objection which has been made, and is sure to be often and strongly reiterated, viz., that this scheme would lower the learning of the Clergy, and diminish the people's reverence for the Ministry. I maintain the contrary of both, i. e. as a final result. First, I ask, how is it possible for our overtasked Clergy to make any serious progress in learning, after they have been admitted to Holy Orders? Is it not true, that in most cases they rather go back in mere learning? How many have told me that they passed a far better examination for Deacons Orders than they did for Priest's. Now a whole day is often lost in going a long distance to baptize a sick child, when the local Deacon would, in most cases, be at hand to perform that office.

The Priest would, by this scheme, be relieved from a considerable portion of outward and ritual duties, and be enabled to engage more earnestly in the more purely spiritual work of the care of souls. I am quite sure, that sermons would not so often be the meagre, hungry things they are, if our Clergy had the helps which Christ and the Church designed they should have.

In fact, under this scheme, we might fairly expect to see the standard of preparation for Priest's Orders considerably elevated.

The second objection—that the people's reverence for the Ministry, would be diminished—I also deny. In cases, too many to be deemed exceptional, our people's reverence for the Clergyman is founded rather upon the fact of his being a "college-man," a "learned man," than upon his divine commission or spiritual character, and this is often all the difference which they can see between him and the Primitive Methodist preacher. But since this difference is certain, in the operation of natural causes, to diminish, on what ground shall be built up reverence for the Ministry?

Now in spite of the petition of the Litany which enumerates the three Orders (though scores of congregations never hear the Litany) multitudes of our people are ignorant of the existence of Three Orders, and still more profoundly ignorant of the nature, powers, and duties of those Orders. The Deacon and Presbyter are alike called "the minister," and no essential, if any distinction is known. An Archdeacon is supposed to be a distinct order; and several of the people in my own mission, at the last visitation of the Archdeacon, spoke of him as "the Deacon!" Why is this, but because the people know, if at all, the Deacon

but by name. He never appears among them as a servant of Christ, with distinct powers and duties. Surely the soldiers of a regiment ought not to require regular orations at intervals in order to know the difference between the various Officers who are over them? So our people should see, and be all their life familiarly acquainted with the servants of Christ who minister to His household. And, surely, knowledge obtained in this way would be better and more impressive than if imparted by dry homilies on the Ministry; and the argument for the authority, and use, and necessity of the several Orders, would be more convincingly inferred from seeing a work done, than from explanations or controversies, which often but beget doubts, and hardly help suggesting the thought, "If those Orders are Divine and so very necessary, why haven't we them amongst us—what good are they doing us?" When our people saw the various Orders doing their appropriate and distinctive work, they would thus acquire a knowledge which mere teaching now is ineffectual to impart. When they saw persons without "college learning" (as they call it) assisting in Holy Sacraments, whose celebration was confined to the Priests, they would see that the ministerial character was imprinted by something more sacred than a University seal, and they would learn to reverence it accordingly. And when they saw their Priests, as before, obliged to maintain a high standard of learning—perhaps higher than now—the respect founded on this would be in nowise diminished.

I would just add, by way of appendix, that even the learned and religious of the Church may not be free from prejudices on this point,—nay are more likely to be the victims of prejudices in favour of their own learning. We are too apt to conceive of scholarship as if it were of the essence of the Priesthood, and not merely in general a useful adjunct—forgetting that that Ministry which for several ages spread and established the Gospel in the face of the world's opposition, numbered "not many wise" among the "callers," (as Dr. Wordsworth supplies the ellipsis.) The observations of the *New York Church Journal* on this point, in its issue of 8th January last, are so pertinent that I crave permission to read them: "The deep ignorance that was so common among the Parish Priests previous to the Reformation, and the intimate connection between the vital power of the Reformation itself, and the revival of sound learning, naturally established as a fundamental idea in the modern English Church, that the Clergy must, as a class, be University-bred men. This has been the general rule. With this, the social position of the clergy has been steadily rising, until now they rank, as a matter of course, among the gentry of the land; and the very idea of a Clergyman of the Church of England is universally understood to include that he shall be both "a scholar and a gentleman." The same has been measurably true of the Church of America, and there are few things of which Churchmen everywhere are apt to be proud, than this But with this great success in elevating the literary and social position of the Clergy as a whole, the Church of England presents some other equally

striking and still more significant facts. The proportion of Bishops to population is *smaller* in that Church than in any other national Church of Christendom. And the proportion of the population which has been stolen away from the National Church, and organised into dissenting and schismatical bodies, is *larger* than in any other national Church of Christendom. This last is one great *result* which stares every honest inquirer in the face, and *must* be taken into consideration by every one who would fully examine the bearings of either of the other facts; it is a result which, it seems to us, ought to be enough to stare out of countenance any advocate who claims that the English system, *as it is*, is the *ne plus ultra* of practical efficiency in preaching the Gospel to the poor.

"Now take into consideration that other fact, that the enormous masses thus stolen from the Church, have belonged almost wholly to the middle and lower classes of Society,—those which were farthest removed from all personal contact with the "Lords Bishops," and from sympathizing with the scholarship gentleness of their parish Clergymen, and add to this that the Ministers who led them away and have all along commanded their confidence, were in education and social standing, *much more nearly on their own level*, and we shall begin to understand how things work, and have worked, and will always work, with poor crooked human nature. A Ministry educated too far above the masses, whether in scholarship or in social position, will gradually lose the power of gaining or keeping the sympathy of the masses; and sympathy once gone, confidence and attachment, and old associations, and principle, and all else, go with it. It is "with the heart that man beliveth unto righteousness." "Nobody questions that the Priest's lips should keep knowledge;" the only question as, *how much* knowledge must they keep?... The "knowledge" that the Priest's lips must keep, is *not* all knowledge that may be needed for removing all doubts and difficulties from *all* minds; but only such as may render him a sound orthodox preacher of the Gospel, a safe and helpful guide to wayfaring men, to lead them into the Way of Life, in all things necessary to salvation. A Priest having that much, is better than no Priest at all; and a Church which steadily refuses to admit to the Priesthood such men as this, to do work *which she can get no other men to do*, will steadily *lose* among the middle and lower classes; and as she loses among these, she will find her strength failing among the higher classes also."

If there be any solidity in these observations, and I think there is, we may thence infer how serviceable would be the two classes of Deacons proposed, as connecting links between the more learned Priesthood and the very lowest of the people. All parts of the Ecclesiastical Body would be more firmly interlaced, a closer and happier union would spring up between Clergy and People—the interposing gulf which has so often been complained of, would be completely bridged over.

The truth is, we have room, and need, and work for all sorts and conditions of persons in the Holy Ministry. The principle which we now so loudly—I am afraid sometimes absurdly

and impiously proclaim,—none but a scholar and a gentleman for the ministry even in its humblest duties, must tend to perpetuate the false impressions of the masses, that the Church of England is but the Church of the aristocracy and of respectable worldly men—not the Church of Jesus Christ, which desires to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to recognize them lovingly. But for our farmers and tradespeople to see members of their own families wearing the honoured and sacred surplice' and ministering in our Desks and Chancels, could not but be a moving argument to the contrary, could not but gave them a deeper and warmer interest in the Church and all that pertained to her.

And, above all, the endeavour to maintain in its fulness of development and operation, in each and every part, that threefold Ministry which is the gift of the Blessed Trinity for the perfecting of the Church, could not but secure the approbation of the Almighty, and bring upon us His grace, according to the "fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."

I would again repeat, in conclusion, that in

these remarks I have but *touched* a few noticeable points, a full discussion being both beyond my power and beyond my time. Enough, however, has been said to invite discussion; and I have entertained no more ambitious aim.

N. B.—Since the above Essay was written, the writer has met with an important Review article, which furnishes no mean confirmation of the views of the Essay.

The following is an extract :—

"With us, indeed, the true Diaconate may be said to be almost in abeyance; and it is perhaps, represented more exactly by the Scripture Reader in some of our parishes, than by the Clergyman in his first year of ordination. *The primitive Deacons were half laymen*, and such was the position of primitive deaconesses.

Epiphanius says that they were broadly distinguished from the Presbyters, in that they were not allowed to officiate liturgically."—*London Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1860, on *Deaconesses*.



